Surára
Pakidái

/85 cont./

9. Meals and Eating Habits

264
262 In the morning the Surára and Pakidái eat very little, usually only one or two bananas or tubers roasted in the hot ashes. I often found that men and women set out to hunt or gather without having eaten anything. If they come across wild fruits on their wanderings, however, they help themselves generously. Small, light meals in the form of banana soup, roasted or steamed bananas, pupunha fruit, sweet potatoes, etc. are eaten at noon. Sometimes there are some leftovers from the meat of the day before. The main meal of the day does not take place until after sundown, by the light of the blazing fire. For at this time the whole family is usually assembled again, and the hunting booty which the man perhaps brought home in the afternoon or the products of the gathering by the women have been prepared. Everywhere one sees the men squatting beside the fire and waiting for food, which includes larger or smaller pieces of meat
[824] supplemented by vegetable fare. In front of them the women have spread out a few palm leaves as an underlayer for the food. The men eat first, and they also get the best pieces of meat. When they are satisfied, the women and children may start eating. Nothing is drunk during the meal, but afterwards a palm-fruit or honey drink is enjoyed.

264 Eating is done with the hands. In one hand the Indian holds a piece of roasted or boiled meat and in the other a roasted banana, a manioc flat-cake, or something similar. Intermittently one reaches into the pot and takes out another piece or cuts it off from
[415] the wooden spit or roasting rack. Soups are drunk out of gourd bowls or calabashes, just like the palm-fruit and honey drinks.

[251] If the hunters' bag was particularly good, one may observe many Indians, men, women, and children, eating all night long, for meat is preserved only before festivals. In connection with this the individual members of the family lie comfortably in their hammocks, converse, sleep a little at intervals, then fetch themselves another piece of meat from the roasting spit or rack. It is
• [261] astonishing what quantities they consume during such a night. On the other hand, they are also easily able to fast for a long period of time.

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273 The beverage of the Sanemá is water. They do not make
271 alcoholic beverages. In recent times the Sanemá who live in
177 contact with the Makiritare have learned to prepare cashíri, and they are beginning to drink it with some frequency. Nevertheless, the preparation of alcoholic beverages is not common among the Sanemá and Yanoama in general.

252 The greater part of their food is toasted or broiled in the
263 coals. They do not eat salt, properly speaking, but they use
261 wood ashes and peppers. They also clean dry clay and eat it.

276 As stimulants they have tobacco and yopo. They do not smoke, but rather roll up the tobacco leaves, and, after treating them with ashes, they put them in back of the lower lip. The yopo is made with certain leaves and ashes of bark. It seems that they have several kinds, according to the degree of strength. They showed us a gray type and a black one. One who wishes to take a dose puts the intoxicating powder in a tube and a companion blows it into his nose. In general, yopo is re-
[764] lated to religious ideas. It appears that they take it at burial ceremonies when they accompany a deceased person and his "híkula upwards." The theurgists also use it frequently in their various ceremonies. There are known cases in which a man "flew off" with a strong dose of yopo and, losing his way, never came back to earth!

581 The founding of a family is the fervent desire of all the
183 young people of the tribe. We observed a degree of irregularity
591 in the custom of determining the matrimonial residence. In the
184 Sanemá group of the Erebato, this seems to be bilocal, as among the Waica of the upper Orinoco (Barker, 1953, p. 478), while on the Ventuari we noticed a tendency toward unilocality. We
591 are not certain, but it would seem that normal residence is initially
182 matrilocal with postmatrimonial betrothal service and then changes
596 to bilocal. This arrangement brings about the formation of bilocal extended families in Yanoama society.

596 Societies with bilocal extended families are relatively
591 rare, but their existence among the Sanemá does not surprise us if we bear in mind that the economic situation of the tribe lends

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

open space ran a belt of rattan palms with their notoriously dangerous black spines. There were just two openings: a way in, and a way out. This was a defence work against any enemy that might come along. An aggressor had little chance of bringing off a surprise attack against the Samatari over this open ground, and if he made a frontal attack he would find "bread for his teeth"—that is, thorns for his feet.

At night, while the Indians were all chattering heedlessly in their hammocks or sleeping the light sleep of the savage, the two gaps in the cordon were closed and the camp became a fortress difficult to storm. If they stay for several days in one place, as sometimes happens during the rainy season when they are visiting their plantations of tobacco and cane (for arrows), they will put up a palisade round the camp, on the Guayca model. This is composed of the trunks of a very tough palm, driven into the ground as close together as possible. Thus entrenched they can withstand whole days of attack from a position of strength.

In the course of our march, one Samatari not only devoured the larvae of bees, neatly excavating them from their cells in the smoked honeycomb, but every now and then he would stop at a dead tree-trunk, seamed with ant-galleries or lanes, and run his thumb and forefinger along the groove as far as possible, pressing out the damp earthy substance, which he conveyed to his mouth like some rare *bonne bouche*. Smacking his lips, he carried on until he had demolished the whole network of these arboreal thoroughfares, and the ants fled away over the surface of the tree-trunk, lamenting the cataclysm that had overtaken them.

Even we tried this ant-hill diet, but a mixture of earth and sawdust hardly appeased our hunger. Sometimes, as we crossed a stream, a few of the Samatari bent down rapidly and picked out of the water some little white stones that were soft like lumps of lime. These they chewed as they went along, apparently swallowing them. They will also eat sand, the dirty, soft, vari-coloured sand which is found with the detritus of vegetable matter thrown up on the banks of a river after a flood. For on top of all this varied diet of theirs, the Samatari are also geophagists—earth-eaters. The reason for this is probably an instinctive prompting which leads them to acquire in this way the minerals their normal food—which they eat without salt or spices—does not supply.

Our great salvation was the fruit: meat being very precious to the savages, they were unwilling to give us any, and we had no means of hunting for ourselves. The gun had simply disappeared. For the Samatari too, fruit is the main

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251 The Guaika /Waica/ do not keep reserves of food. All of their foods are cooked fresh or at least within a period of two weeks from the time they are ready. Therefore, in case their conucos have a scarcity of produce, they must go to live in the forest, gathering seeds, fruits, and roots, and devoting more [628] time than usual to hunting and fishing. When another settlement has an abundance of food in a time of scarcity, it would be very fortunate to be able to live completely from this settlement instead of having to subsist from the forest.

Consumption of Food

263 No salt is consumed as such, that is, as salt properly speak- [824] ing. They eat wood ashes, especially the ashes of a tree called "kololi." The ashes may be eaten as they are or with hot water poured over them to obtain a tasty liquid. To this liquid, called "ubu," is added strong peppers. Platanos and other foods are dipped in the resulting sauce to flavor and ingest them.

• 261 Clay is also dried and eaten, especially the clay from certain nests of insects.

[862] No child may be weaned until it has learned to eat the said ashes and clay.

Earth and clean dust are also eaten. They are considered clean if they are taken from a place where a fire has recently burned, from a river bed, or from a bare spot or bank of sand which the sun has been able to purify.

264 Their hours for eating are as follows: Breakfast is taken shortly after sunrise, and the second turn when they come back from work in their "conucos," generally at some time near midday. They eat again near /452/ sunset. This schedule varies, being adjusted for hunting trips, moving from the settlement, etc. They eat quite a lot between meals, especially wild fruits and bananas and ripe platanos.

/469 cont./

513 352 The third essential thing is the hammock. The Guaika must have a hammock in order to sleep at night. In his dwelling he has a cotton hammock or a hammock made of vines split longitudinally. On a hunting trip he may travel with his hammock made out of cords of vine or without carrying any. In this latter case, each night he will make a temporary hammock /470/ out of cords of bark, and, in case he stays in the same general area, he will use it for several nights. Then, in order to travel light, he will abandon this hammock of cords of bark and will go to his home, where his good hammock awaits him.

262 594 [251] The supply of food which the Guaika have is generally good and apparently quite nutritious. From time to time there is a shortage, and they do not accumulate reserves. Shortages are generally not too serious, for which reason they can usually bear the period of privation, subsisting from a neighboring settlement, which will be paid back for the visit when in its turn bad times come to it.

261 726 The complete loss of a "conuco" as a result of being constantly driven out of the area by an enemy is a quite serious matter. We observed a settlement (that of Bichaasatedi) subsisting with great difficulty for a year until its new "conuco" began to produce, after having been driven out of their former area by a hostile group (the one from Liakoatedi).

352 The Guaika do not make seats, but they rarely sit on the ground if they can avoid it. Generally they sit in a hammock or on a piece of firewood.

512 On an ordinary day the Guaika awake with the dawn. The wife prepares the roasted platanos for the whole family. Around 7:30 or 8:00 the majority of the inhabitants of the settlement go to work in the "conuco." Those who remain in the settlement in general rest the entire morning. Some few women gather in a party and go out to make firewood out of a dead tree, recently fallen. Those who work in the conuco begin to come back at noon. On the way to the settlement they bathe in the stream. After a brief rest each person roasts a few platanos for his lunch. Then, around 2:00 in the afternoon, the [276] "yopo" is prepared, and it is blown up the noses of many of the